

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in the present application. By this reply, claims 15-28 have been added. Claims 1, 7, 8, 14, 15 and 24 are independent claims.

The specification, abstract and claims have been amended to correct minor informalities and to clarify the invention according to U.S. practice. These modifications do not add new matter to the disclosure.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER/ NEW CLAIMS

Claims 3-6 and 11-13 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 7 have been amended to incorporate therein substantially the subject matter of allowable claim 4. Similarly, independent claims 8 and 14 have been amended to incorporate therein substantially the subject matter of allowable claim 12. Therefore, independent claims 1, 7, 8 and 14 and their dependent claims 2-6 and 9-13 (due to their dependency) are allowable over the prior art of record. An indication of allowance of claims 1-14 is thus deemed proper and respectfully requested.

New independent claims 15 and 24 also contain similar subject matter as claims 1 and 7 and are thus believed to be allowable over the prior art of record. Claims 16-23 and 25-28 are allowable as being dependent on independent

claims 15 and 24, respectively. Thus, indication of allowance of claims 15-28 is also respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 102/103 REJECTION

Claims 1, 2 and 8-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hayashiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,014,094). Claims 7 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayashiyama et al. as applied to the claims above, and in further view of Mori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,638,064) and Tran (U.S. Patent No. 6,195,778). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Without acquiescing to any of the Examiner's allegations made in rejecting these claims, to expedite prosecution only, independent claims 1, 7, 8 and 14 have been amended as discussed above to incorporate therein substantially the allowable subject matter indicated by the Examiner. Accordingly, these claims are allowable, and the rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Should there be any matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

Applicant(s) respectfully petitions under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and 1.17 for a three-month extension of time in which to respond to the Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee in the amount of \$1,020.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time use.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAK/EHC:sld

Attachment: Abstract of Disclosure